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Province of British Columbia
Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing

Canada - British Columbia Agreement for Recreation and Conservation on the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail



MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Longitude 127 West from 196 Greenwich

For further information concerning this plan, or the Agreement for Recreation and Conservation on the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail, please contact either:

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COVER

Portion of a map showing Alexander Mackenzie's exploration to the Pacific in 1793. (Mackenzie, 1801)
National Map Collection, Public Archives of Canada.

PHOTO CREDITS:

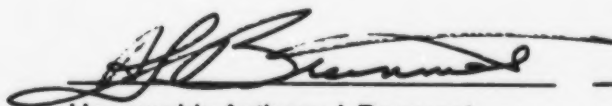
Page 11, 12, 20 (lower), 23, 33 by Halle Flygare.
All remaining photos courtesy of Parks Canada.



The Canada - British Columbia Agreement for Recreation and Conservation on the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail provides a mechanism for establishing, protecting and developing a co-operative heritage area along this historic corridor in British Columbia.

This Master Development Plan is the culmination of efforts by a great number of people representing three levels of government, concerned citizens and affected groups. These individuals, over the past year, have co-operated with the Co-ordinating and Management Committees established under the Agreement, to produce this Plan, which makes recommendations regarding the future protection and management of the Trail, as well as specific projects which will enhance the interpretation and development of the natural, historic and recreational values to be found along the Trail.

We are pleased to approve this Master Development Plan.

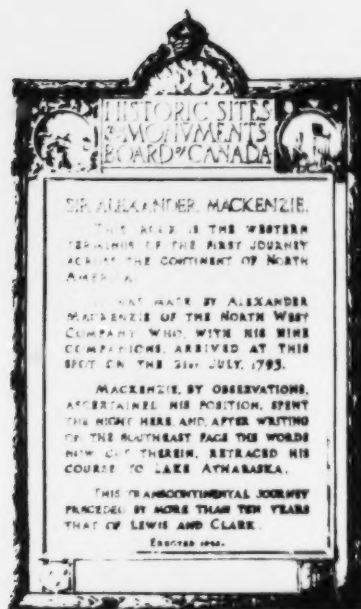


Honourable Anthony J. Brummet
Minister of Lands, Parks & Housing
Province of British Columbia



Honourable Suzanne Blais-Grenier
Minister of Environment
Canada

February 1985



Plaque commemorating the first crossing of the continent, at Sir Alexander Mackenzie Provincial Park, Elcho Harbour, B.C.

Foreword

"...Where is there a fitting memorial to Alexander Mackenzie, the pathfinder, the discoverer of two great rivers, the discoverer of the fallacy of the much sought North-West Passage by sea, the first to discover and make the northwest passage by land? To our shame be it acknowledged there is none..."

(Mackenzie of Canada, M.S. Wade, 1927)

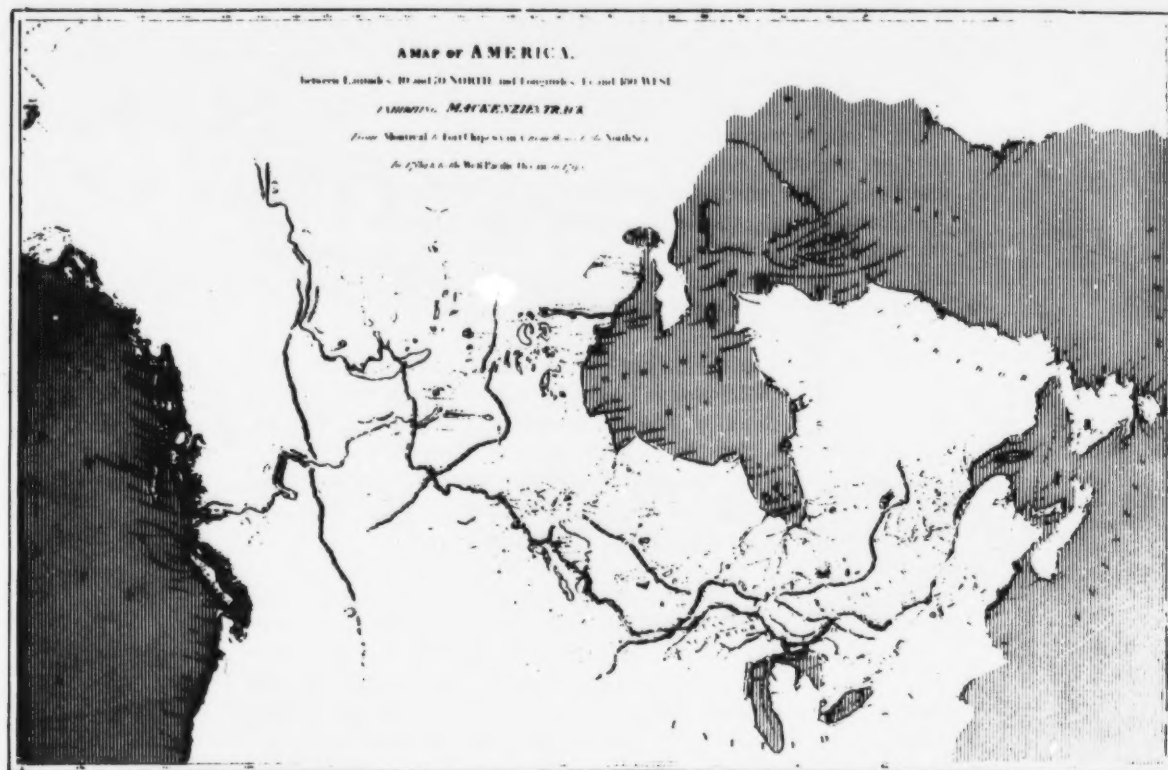
Since Wade's remarks almost 60 years ago, Canadians have made significant strides in conserving their national heritage. Quebec and the maritime provinces are celebrating the 450th anniversary of Jacques Cartier's first voyage to North America. Parks Canada prepares for 1985, the centennial of national parks in Canada. Also in 1985, the Canadian Pacific Railway will celebrate one hundred years since the completion of the transcontinental railway. During 1984 Ontario is commemorating its fur-trade heritage with "Rendez-vous Fort William," holding canoe pageants in tribute to the voyageurs of the Great Lakes and the northwest.

In British Columbia, the city of Prince George celebrates its 70th anniversary in 1985, and in 1986 the city of Vancouver holds its one-hundredth birthday, hosting a world's fair based on themes of transportation and communication. The year 1987 will be the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, originally proposed to honour Sir Alexander Mackenzie, but named for Canada's 15th Governor General.

This Agreement between British Columbia and Canada to protect and interpret the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail accords recognition to one of the most significant feats of exploration in the world, one that had profound impact on the political and economic axis of North America. This Master Development Plan outlines how that protection and interpretation might occur.



".... My own load, and that of Mr. Mackay, consisted of twenty-two pounds of pemmican, some rice, a little sugar, &c. amounting in the whole to about seventy pounds each, besides our arms and ammunition. I had also the tube of my telescope swung across my shoulder, which was a troublesome addition to my burthen." (Mackenzie 1801)



Early map showing Mackenzie's voyages of 1789 & 1793

Acknowledgements

For nearly a decade, leading up to the signing of this first Canada-British Columbia Agreement for Recreation and Conservation, agencies such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the B.C. Heritage Trust, the Outdoor Recreation Council of B.C., and the Vancouver Foundation gave support and encouragement to the concept of the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail. Many individuals worked tirelessly, devoting valuable time and personal resources to further support the project.

This plan would not have been completed without the support, assistance and guidance of the Canadian public, particularly the many regional and local residents who chose to provide comment during the planning process.

The interest and support of all those who have contributed to the development of this plan is greatly appreciated.



Mountain Caribou (rangifer tarandus)

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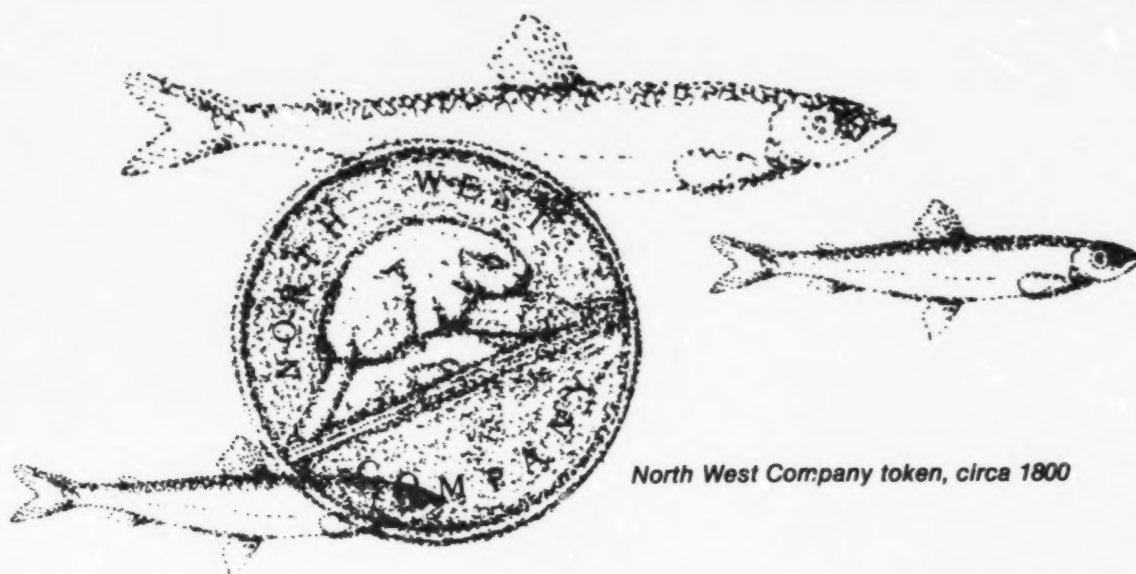


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ALEXANDER MACKENZIE Esq^r

"....I was led, at an early period of life, by commercial views, to the country North-West of Lake Superior, in North America, and being endowed by Nature with an inquisitive mind and enterprising spirit; possessing also a constitution and frame of body equal to the most arduous undertakings, and being familiar with toilsome exertions in the prosecution of mercantile pursuits, I not only contemplated the practicability of penetrating across the continent of America, but was confident in the qualifications, as I was animated by the desire, to undertake the perilous enterprize."

1.0 Introduction



North West Company token, circa 1800

1.1 Historic Background

"A Canada From Sea to Sea"

In May of 1793, Alexander Mackenzie left his outpost in the northwest for an ambitious journey, aimed at finding a trade-route to the Pacific coast for the Northwest Company. His exploration, from the Peace River near Lake Athabasca to tidewater on Dean Channel, took 72 days and covered over 2,000 km of unmapped terrain. At the westernmost point in his journey, on a rock in the intertidal, he painted a memorial to his now famous exploration:

"Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety three."

Although the original inscription painted in vermilion and grease has long since washed away, this nationally significant historic site is now marked with a monument honouring the achievements of this great Canadian explorer.

Alexander Mackenzie was the first European to cross the Rocky Mountains, and first person to make a successful crossing of the continent. He preceded, by twelve years, the often more celebrated U.S. expedition of Lewis and Clark.

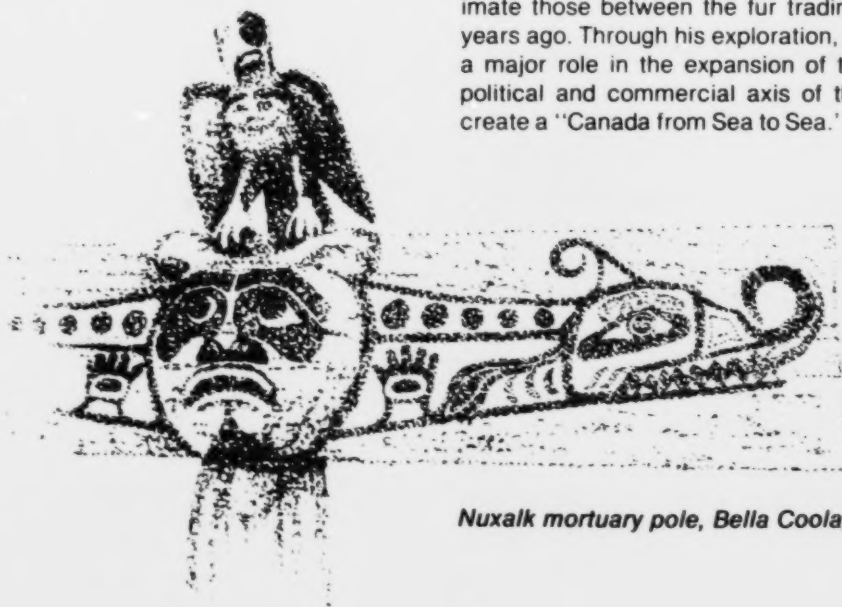
Combined with a journey he had made three years before, to the Arctic Ocean, Mackenzie proved for the first time there was no "northwest passage", a myth that had fueled exploration since the days of Columbus.

In 1801 he published his journal; a popular account of his adventures, and an elaborate description of the fur trade. It also provided one of the first and finest accounts of northwest coast native culture.

During the last seventeen days of his odyssey to the Pacific, Mackenzie was guided by natives along an ancient trail, part of an extensive latticework blanketing the entire northwest. These trails were important trade routes connecting coastal people with those of the interior. Dried fish, cedar-bark and berries from the coast were among the traditional trade-goods bartered for moose hides, beaver and valuable obsidian from the interior. Eulachon, a small fish that was dried, or often rendered into grease, was also a valuable commodity. Great quantities moved inland on the backs of native people. For this reason, aboriginal trade-routes are referred to as "grease trails." They were also important for establishing territory, and for reinforcing kinship between native peoples.

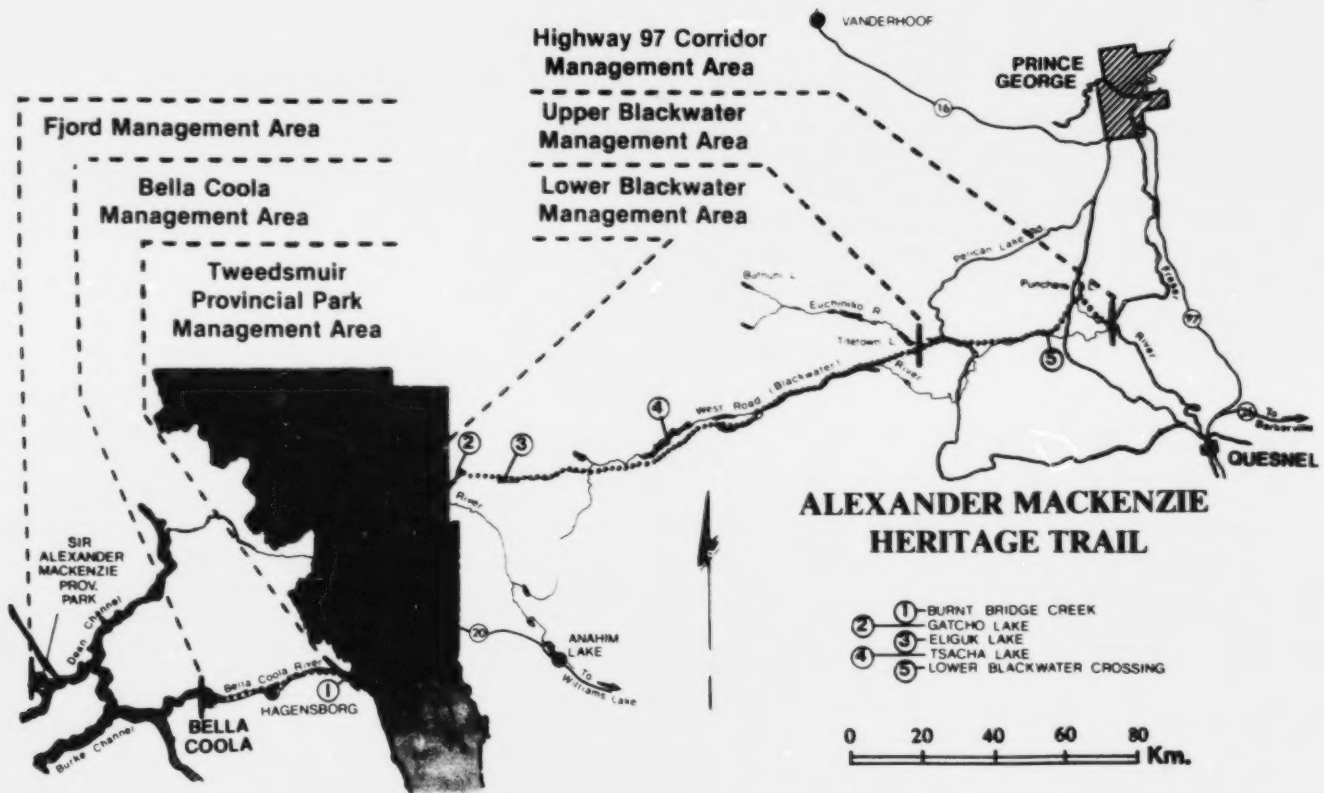
Although considered to be a failure by his partners in the fur trade, since it did not provide the company with an immediately practical route to the Pacific, Mackenzie's exploration did generate considerable international interest. It led directly to an expansion of the fur trade in the northwest. His journal was used by both Simon Fraser and David Thompson in their explorations of the southern Pacific slope, the entire Fraser and Columbia River basins. Within ten years of his journal being published, trading posts had been established at Ft. St. James, Ft. Macleod and Ft. Fraser.

Today, the boundaries of Canada and the United States approximate those between the fur trading companies of almost 200 years ago. Through his exploration, Alexander Mackenzie played a major role in the expansion of the fur trade, influenced the political and commercial axis of the continent, and helped to create a "Canada from Sea to Sea."



Nuxalk mortuary pole, Bella Coola, B.C.

"...The inhabitants received us with great kindness, but instead of fire, they placed a long, clean, and well-made trough before us full of berries. ..."



1.2 Regional Setting and Trail Description

The Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail is located in west-central British Columbia. It is a corridor, 420 kilometres in length, stretching from the mouth of the West Road (Blackwater) River to Sir Alexander Mackenzie Provincial Park. Although a "trail," it also includes local wagon roads, provincial highways, forest access roads, rivers and coastal waterways. Approximately 300 kilometres of the corridor is recreational trail.

For planning purposes the trail has been divided into five management areas, based on physiography and administrative jurisdictions. These, in turn, have been classified into trail segments for more detailed planning.

Tweedsmuir Provincial Park is the most scenic management area and has the highest potential for recreation in a wilderness setting. A well-developed network of trails inter-connect with the heritage route and attract visitors to the scenic Bella Coola valley. The Bella Coola Valley Area includes the historic settlements at Hagensborg and Bella Coola. Here, the heritage route retraces the river journey made by Mackenzie. The Fjord Area includes the coastal waters of Dean and Burke Channels, as far west as Sir Alexander Mackenzie Provincial Park.

The eastern sector, along the West Road (Blackwater) River, has high heritage and recreation values. The Upper Blackwater Area remains relatively remote, but has existing settlement along the trail. The Lower Blackwater Area is close to populations centres in the B.C. Cariboo region, is the most developed and provides the widest range of recreation opportunities.

The co-operative heritage area protects and preserves the following important cultural resources:

- an historic trail, regarded as one of the major east-west aboriginal trade routes, with a record of almost 6,000 years of use.
- major concentrations of archaeological sites at Punchaw Lake, Lower Blackwater Crossing, Titetown Lake, Eliguk Lake and Gatcho Lake.
- highly significant cultural sites at Burnt Bridge Creek, Noosgulch and Bella Coola, all in the Bella Coola valley.
- National Historic Sites commemorating Alexander Mackenzie, at two locations in the heritage area.
- 300 kilometres of trail and wagon road, of which some 100 km is well-preserved aboriginal footpath.
- an existing ranching/farming community in the Upper Blackwater.
- an historic settlement in the Bella Coola Valley.



A section of heritage trail, now well-used wagon road.

1.3 Concept of a Heritage Recreation Corridor

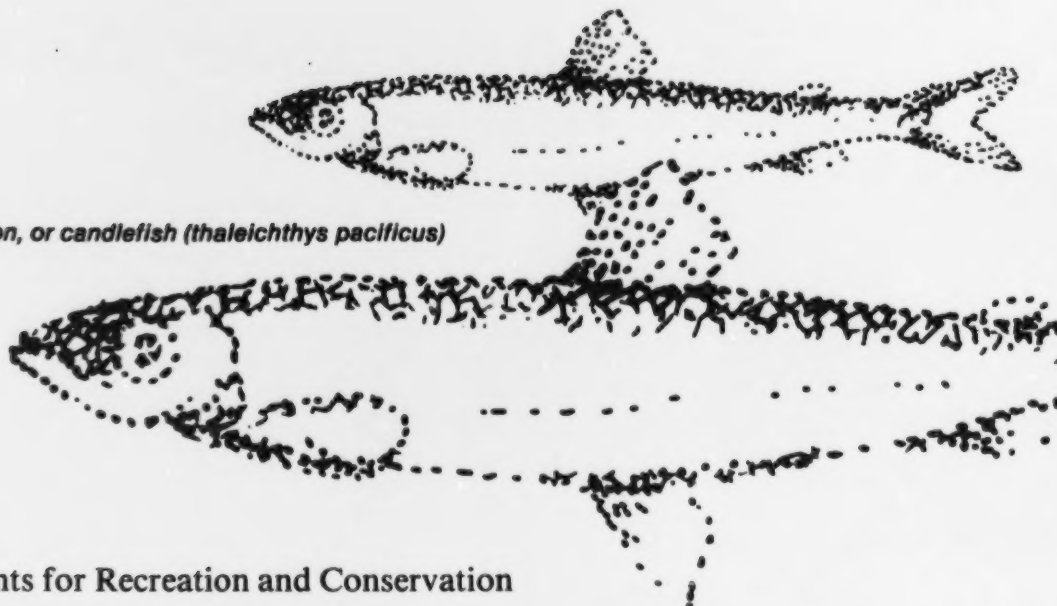
In the last decade, there has been increased public awareness of the value of historic routes as heritage resources.

Linear developments present complex problems for planning and management. There are often multiple jurisdictions, problems in negotiating rights of access and inherent difficulties in co-ordinating the various interests of parties affected by such projects.

The Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail poses a number of potential conflicts, challenging planners to provide a single, co-ordinated plan of action for effective management. Some of the considerations which must be addressed, are as follows:

- there is national support for the designation and protection of this section of trail followed by Alexander Mackenzie.
- the trail has a large number of archaeological sites, many of which are sensitive to disturbance. The Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia have mandates to ensure protection of these valuable resources.
- the trail supports a small, agriculturally based community. Residents indicate a desire to preserve existing lifestyles.
- sections of the trail area are experiencing an increase in recreational use, much of which is uncontrolled.
- regional and local business interests regard the Agreement as a means of stimulating the local economy through tourism development.
- reconciliation of natural resource development objectives with protection and preservation of the heritage trail is the most severe problem for planning.

Eulachon, or candlefish (thaleichthys pacificus)



1.4 Agreements for Recreation and Conservation

Agreements for Recreation and Conservation (ARC) are a federal initiative intended to provide a framework for co-ordinated planning and development of areas with significant heritage values, but which do not warrant designation as a national or provincial park. This framework allows Parks Canada, on behalf of the federal government, to enter into agreements with provincial, municipal, and regional governments, private agencies, and concerned citizens to co-operatively develop measures for the identification, protection, interpretation and development of areas deemed to be nationally significant.

The historic trail followed by Alexander Mackenzie meets criteria established for inclusion in the ARC program, namely:

- it has nationally significant natural and cultural heritage resources.
- the heritage resources are in such condition and setting that continuing protection and management is possible.
- the development of the trail's heritage potential requires the co-operation of government, private agencies, and individuals.
- the area complements both national and provincial park system elements and objectives.

2.0 Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail



A Canada-British Columbia Agreement for Recreation and Conservation on the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail was signed May 28, 1982 in Quesnel, B.C. Its primary purpose is to accord recognition, protection and heritage status to the route followed by Alexander Mackenzie in 1793. It is the first such agreement to be implemented in B.C.

2.1 General Objectives of the Agreement

- to identify, preserve, interpret and develop the natural, historical, archaeological and scenic heritage resources of the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail; and
- to increase the educational, cultural and recreational benefits to be derived from the said resources for the benefit of the people of Canada, and for residents of the Province of British Columbia in particular.

The Agreement sets out the basic management and administrative framework for planning and implementation of the agreement. It also stipulates certain conditions, such as:

- the purpose of the Agreement.
- limits of financial participation.
- terms for review and amendment to the Agreement.
- procedures.
- areas of responsibility.

2.2 Purpose of the Master Development Plan

The Master Development Plan is a required project of the Agreement. Its purpose is to gain approval for projects. Specifically, the goals of the Master Development Plan are as follows:

- to identify the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail.
- to compile a listing of all relevant planning considerations and discuss issues which may affect implementation of the plan.
- to solicit and incorporate views of the public in the development plan.
- to recommend a management framework which would continue beyond the term of the Agreement.
- to recommend works projects for recreation, heritage protection, resource management and interpretation.
- to provide cost estimates for each major project area.
- to recommend protective legislation or regulations concerning trail tenure and designation.

2.3 Planning Process

The Agreement established a framework for co-ordination and preparation of the Master Development Plan.

The planning team was comprised of representatives from the following agencies:

Government of Canada

Department of the Environment

—Parks Canada

Department of Indian and Northern Affairs

Province of British Columbia

Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing

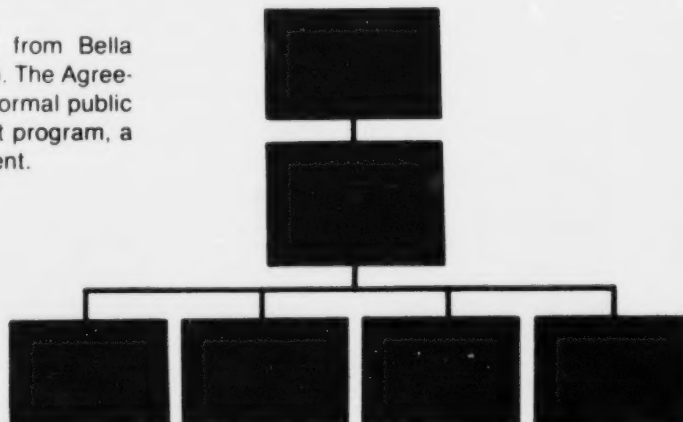
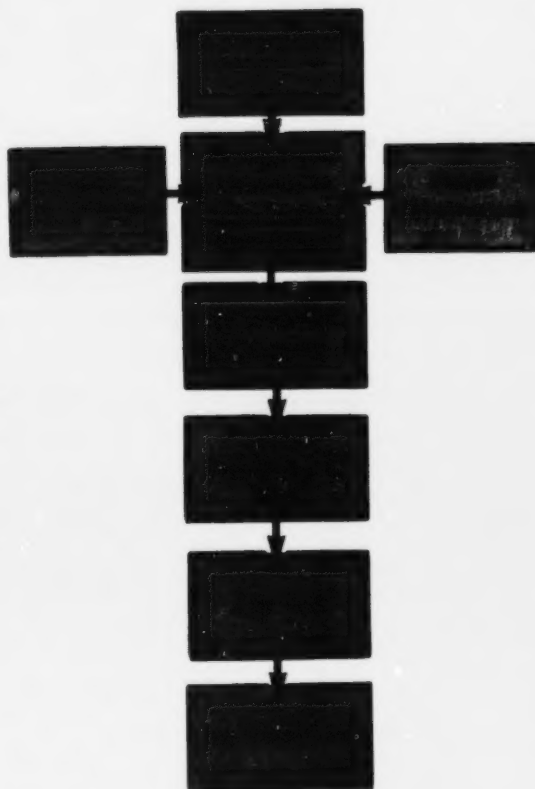
—Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division

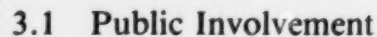
—Lands Branch

Ministry of Provincial Secretary and Government Services

—Heritage Conservation Branch

Two community representatives were appointed, from Bella Coola and Quesnel, to provide for local participation. The Agreement also provides for direct native participation. Formal public meetings were held as part of a public involvement program, a summary of which is available as a separate document.





Public involvement is an integral component of the Agreement, and the following factors must be considered, during project implementation:

- Cariboo Tourist Association
Prince George Heritage Advisory Committee
City of Prince George
Cariboo Regional District
Blackwater-Ootsa Community Association
Anahim Lake Businessmen's Association.

3.2 Regional Integration

Table 1: Themes of Existing B.C. Heritage Attractions in the Vicinity of the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail.

3.3 Existing Trail Use

The trail's major appeal is the opportunity for long-distance backpacking along an historic route, a traverse which normally takes about three weeks. However, due to the remoteness of the area, the length of the trail and the absence of visitor facilities hiker use remains low.

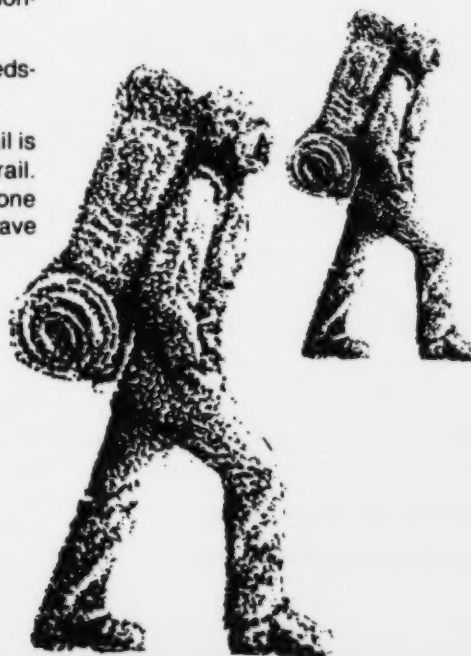
Visitor use is currently concentrated at existing forest recreation sites in the Lower Blackwater Area, or in Tweedsmuir Provincial park. Use of facilities is heaviest on weekends, and during hunting or fishing season.

The trail supplies a wide range of recreation opportunities besides hiking. These include horseback riding, fishing, hunting, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, photography, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Some portions of the trail are becoming popular with all-terrain-vehicle (ATV) enthusiasts, and sections of the West Road (Blackwater) River provide excellent canoeing.

Fly-in resorts are established along the Upper Blackwater River, and cater mainly to clientele seeking a high quality wilderness angling experience. Residents depend heavily on hunting, trapping, guiding and outfitting.

The following concerns influence the development approach favoured in this plan:

- All-terrain-vehicle access and use is widespread and increasing, along some sections of the trail.
- Uncontrolled vehicle access is causing environmental damage, and coincides with increases in reported vandalism.
- Residents wish to maintain traditional patterns of access using vehicles, but want curtailment of casual traffic originating from outside the area.
- Horse-use is a traditional and accepted use of the trail.
- Unauthorized use of natural forage, for horse feed, by non-residents is a major concern.
- Increased levels of horse-use in the alpine area of Tweedsmuir Park may create ecological problems.
- The major appeal of the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail is its attractiveness as a long-distance hiking or riding trail. However, few visitors travel the entire length of the trail in one visit. Visitor activity is concentrated at locations which have relatively good road access.





3.4 Trail Tenure

At present, over 96% of the trail traverses Crown land. Approximately 50% is under the jurisdiction of the B.C. Ministry of Forests, and 25% is provincial park or recreation reserve. The remainder crosses vacant Crown land or follows public highways or forest roads.

Sections of trail currently cross private land, Indian Reserves or land alienated through grazing or residential lease.

At the present time there is no legal protection applied to the trail. However, in 1983, the Province of British Columbia established an 800 m wide "planning reserve" along its entire length, to temporarily restrict land alienation until there is approval of the Master Development Plan. Lease applications have continued to be processed.

3.5 Indian Reserves

The existing trail crosses a number of Indian Reserves, some of which have significant heritage resources.

Indian Reserves are private property under federal jurisdiction, protected by the Indian Act, and trespass is illegal.

This plan will make proposals for diverting sections of the trail to bypass all reserve land. Proposed trail relocations will not diminish the historic significance of the overall route, and visitors will be warned against trespass.

3.6 Forestry

Most of the trail crosses land under the administration of the B.C. Ministry of Forests, classified as Tree Farm License, or Provincial Forest. In places, the trail crosses or is located near private land being harvested.

The Ministry of Forests has been consulted in the preparation of this plan, and will become involved in future trail management.

The following concerns are of interest to the Ministry of Forests, and licensees:

- agreement on timing of harvesting operations and road construction.
- management implications of insect infestation, and control measures.
- fire control.
- public use of access roads and areas under active forest management.
- development of new roads.
- viewshed management and visual integrity of the landscape.

3.7 Agriculture

Agriculture continues to be important for local residents. Land tenure dictates the degree of agricultural development, and has implications for planning and management of the Agreement.

Land used for farming or ranching may be privately owned, or held through crown lease. Leases are granted by the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing, and are subject to certain conditions. Leases are open to periodic review by the issuing agency.

Trail development will not affect existing agriculture, nor should it hinder applications for future grazing leases in the vicinity of the trail.

An influx of large horse-parties to the trail area may increase competition for natural fodder. Natural hay meadows are now completely committed to use by local ranchers.

Along the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail, agriculture is concentrated in the Upper Blackwater, the Bella Coola Valley, and to a limited extent in the Lower Blackwater.

Lower Blackwater:

Most agricultural activity is in the Titetown Lake-Batnuni Lake area, predominantly as hobby farms, ranching or grazing lease.

Upper Blackwater:

Limitations imposed by severe climate, poor soil and distance from markets makes agriculture a marginal operation. Haying of natural meadows is important as a source of fodder.

Bella Coola Valley:

A fertile agricultural area enables local residents to become relatively self-sufficient.



Natural hay-meadows are an important resource for ranchers of the Upper Blackwater area.

3.8 Mining

Mineral resources in the co-operative heritage area remain largely undeveloped. Existing mining leases do not conflict with trail use and development, as proposed in this plan.

There are active placer mining claims on the lower reaches of the West Road (Blackwater) River, at Lower Blackwater Crossing and two at Charleson Creek about 9 km from the river mouth. These are small, and do not conflict with preservation of the trail.

Management guidelines are being developed which will allow for ongoing mineral resource development.

3.9 Fisheries

Numerous lakes, rivers and streams along the trail support significant fish populations, the result of a clean, highly productive spawning and rearing habitat combined with low angling pressure. Access is difficult and expensive for most sport fishermen. The West Road River has Rainbow Trout, Dolly Varden, Lake Char, Kokanee and species of whitefish. The upper reaches of the Dean River provide excellent angling for Rainbow Trout. The Bella Coola River draws large numbers of sports-fishermen seeking coho and chinook salmon, also steelhead and cutthroat trout.

All rivers and lakes support an extremely important native food fishery. The West Road and Euginiko River systems have a wide variety of coarse fish (suckers, chub), all historically important to southern Carrier people, and which were also reported by Mackenzie in 1793. Today, these fish also have high interpretive value.

The Bella Coola River provides mainly salmon and eulachon, a small smelt-like fish which is either dried or rendered into "grease." Both species have very high cultural importance to native people.

Sports fish and coarse species are important resources for area residents. Commercial fish-camps and guest lodges cater to fly-in visitors seeking a high quality, semi-wilderness angling experience. Residents also depend on fish to supply a significant proportion of their food.

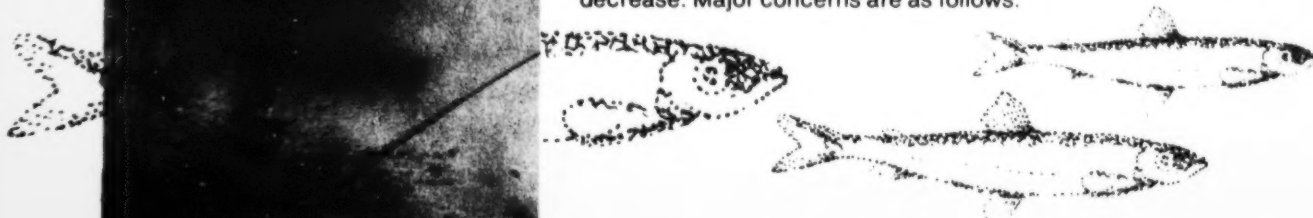
Angling pressure is increasing on all stocks. The Bella Coola River has special restrictions imposed on sports fishing as a conservation measure.

If larger numbers of visitors benefit from easier, uncontrolled access and are drawn to this area, fish stocks can be expected to decrease. Major concerns are as follows:

- poorly planned or careless development will result in uncontrolled access, resulting in a greater angler pressure on local fish stocks.
- angling pressure may decrease stocks of a particular species, creating an imbalance in fish populations. This, in turn, becomes more difficult to correct.
- maintenance of local and native food fisheries.
- maintaining a high quality sports fishing experience which draws visitors to fish camps and guest lodges, particularly in the Upper Blackwater area.
- protection of species with potential for interpretation, such as the eulachon of the Bella Coola River, and the small sockeye salmon run of the West Road (Blackwater) River.



The Euginiko and West Road River systems provide some of British Columbia's best angling.



3.10 Wildlife

The area supports a wide variety of mammals, birds, reptiles and other wildlife. Of the large mammals, moose are the most abundant and the most sought-after game animal. Mule-deer are found on the open side-hill of south facing slopes, browsing on grass and young shoots of poplar.

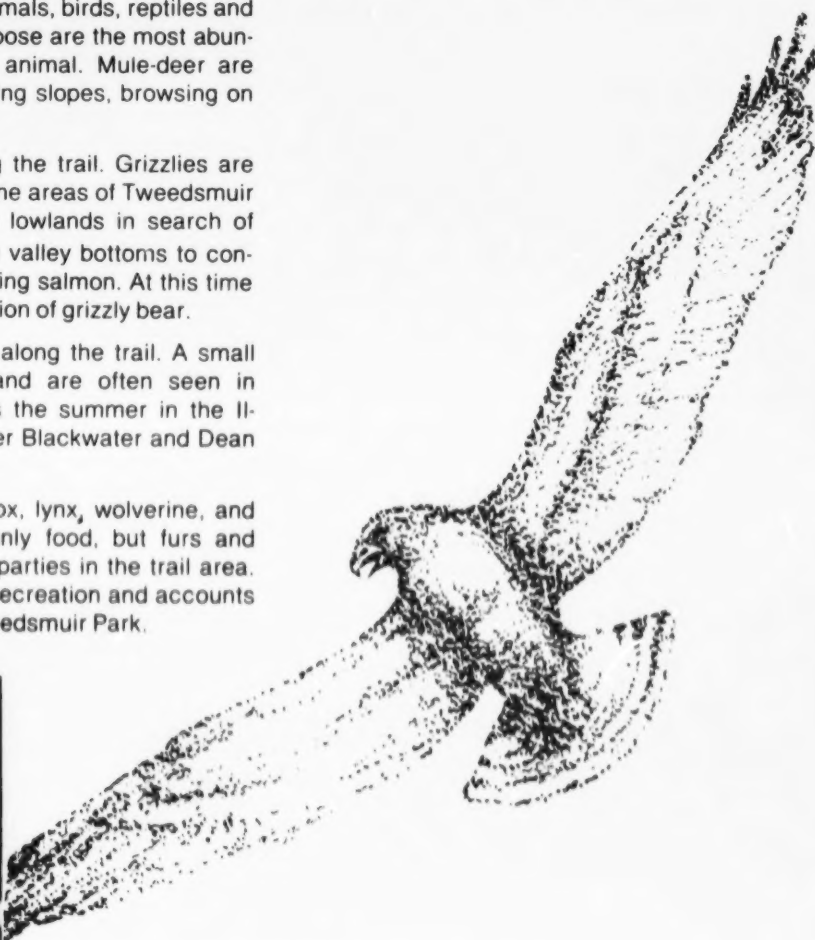
Grizzly and black bear are found along the trail. Grizzlies are more common in the alpine and sub-alpine areas of Tweedsmuir Park, but occasionally wander through lowlands in search of food. In the fall, bears are drawn to the valley bottoms to congregate along rivers and feast on spawning salmon. At this time the Bella Coola valley has a large population of grizzly bear.

Mountain caribou are sometimes seen along the trail. A small herd occupies the Rainbow Range, and are often seen in Mackenzie Pass. A larger herd spends the summer in the Ilgachuz Range, wintering along the Upper Blackwater and Dean Rivers.

Other mammals of note include wolf, fox, lynx, wolverine, and muskrat. Together, they provide not only food, but furs and revenue for outfitters who lead hunting parties in the trail area. Wildlife viewing is now a major form of recreation and accounts for a significant portion of trail use in Tweedsmuir Park.



During the fall, Grizzly Bears congregate along the banks of the Atnarko and Bella Coola Rivers.



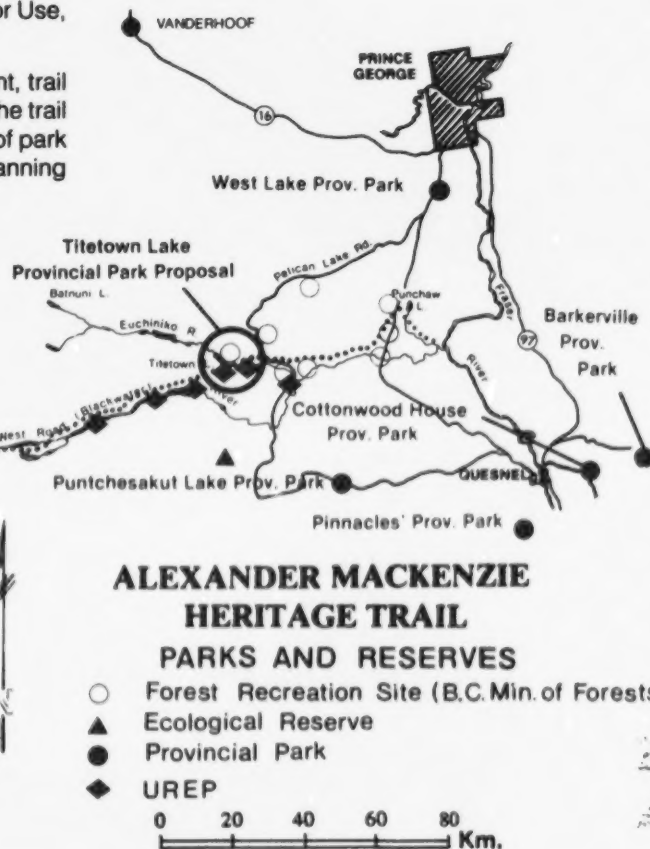
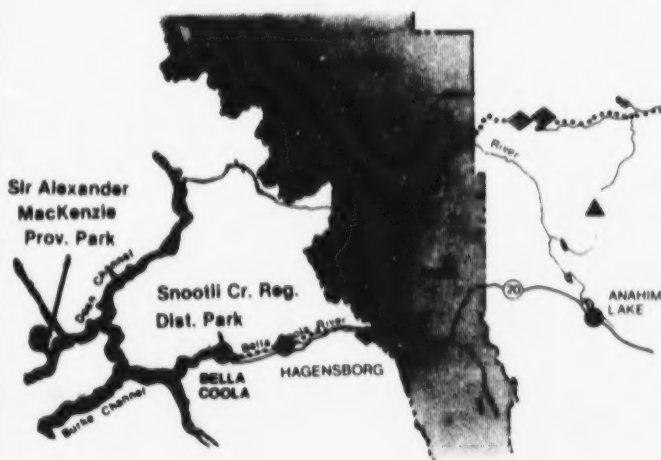
Major concerns for wildlife are as follows:

- large number of visitors to the trail may have an adverse impact on the population, distribution and habit of some species.
- easier access and increased visitor use of the trail may disturb some ungulate herds.
- increased use of vehicles and ATVs may affect wildlife through:
 - incidences of wildlife harassment.
 - altering predator-prey relationships.
- local residents depend on wildlife as a food supply. Easier access may draw more hunting pressure and poaching.
- special protection is needed in specific locations for rare or endangered species, such as:
 - caribou – trumpeter swans
 - pelicans – sandhill crane
- with increased numbers of visitors there is a higher probability for bear-human confrontations.

3.11 Parks and Reserves

The co-operative heritage area includes two provincial parks, an area proposed for designation as a provincial park, a regional district park, and a number of small reserves established for Use, Recreation and Enjoyment of the Public (UREP).

Provincial parks are focal points for recreation development, trail access and interpretation. They also accord protection to the trail by controlling access and use of certain areas. The status of park and recreation reserves must be considered in any future planning for the trail.



Tweedsmuir Provincial Park:

- largest provincial park in B.C.; established in 1937 and named after the 15th Governor General for Canada, John Buchan, Baron Tweedsmuir of Elsfield.
- designated as Class "B" park, but includes the Rainbow Nature Conservancy area.
- Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail traverses part of the Rainbow Nature Conservancy.
- the B.C. Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division is preparing a park master plan (1984).

Sir Alexander Mackenzie Provincial Park:

- a small coastal park near Elcho Harbour, approximately 65 km northwest of Bella Coola, on Dean Channel.
- location of a Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada plaque commemorating Sir Alexander Mackenzie, erected in 1926.
- an archaeological survey of the park was completed in 1983-84, part of a heritage resource inventory conducted under the Agreement.

Titetown Provincial Park (proposal 1984)

- area surrounding and including an existing forest recreation site in the Lower Blackwater Management area.
- as an existing trailhead, the proposed park will be important for managing use and access to the trail, especially between the Euchiniko River and the Upper Blackwater Management area.

Snootli Creek Regional District Park (Walker Island):

- formerly a provincial park, now under the jurisdiction of the Central-Coast Regional District.
- located on the south bank of the Bella Coola River, only 4 km from Bella Coola, this park contains significant native heritage resources.

Reserves for the Use, Recreation and Enjoyment of the Public (UREP):

- these reserves exist as map notations, under the jurisdiction of the Lands Branch.

3.12 Resource Inventory

During 1983-84 the following resource inventory projects were carried out, some of which are ongoing, to provide background for concept planning.

Heritage Protection

- Archaeological survey; Lower West Road (Blackwater) River
- Archaeological survey; Sir Alexander Mackenzie Provincial Park.

Interpretation

- Annotated Bibliography on Native Trails

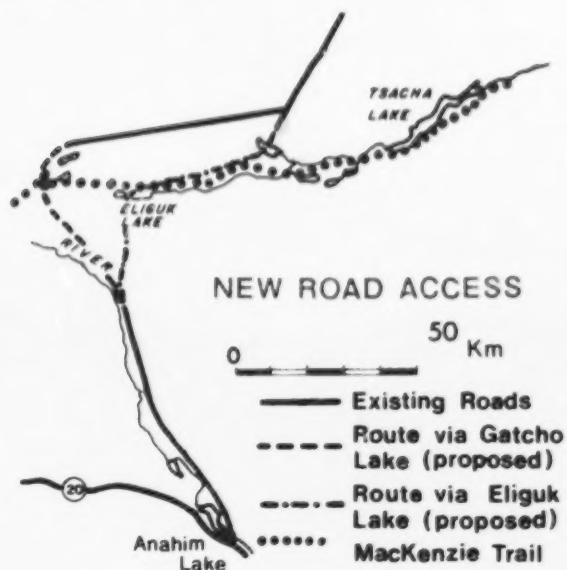
Recreation

- Trail Inventory; Lower Blackwater Management Area
- Trail Inventory; Upper Blackwater Management Area

Resource Management

- Resource Inventory; Fishery/Wildlife Resources

These studies supplement a large library of existing resource documents prepared during the last decade leading to the development of this plan.



3.13 New Road Access

New access to the trail will soon be created in the Upper Blackwater Management area, through construction of a road between Anahim Lake and Vanderhoof following one of two routes:

- between Anahim Lake and Vanderhoof by way of Blue Lake and 100 Mile Camp, crossing the trail at the east end of Eliguk Lake.
- a connector by way of Dean River, crossing the trail at Gatcho Lake.

Implementation of either proposal may have an impact on the heritage resources of the trail, since existing patterns of visitor use would be altered. Detailed planning and assessment for potential trailheads will have to be carried out, once road proposals are clearly identified.

4.0 Heritage Resources



4.1 Regional Landscape

The province's landscape can be classified according to land-form. This has formed the basis for provincial and national park systems planning where representative landscapes are included in the respective park systems. The following physiographic units are crossed by the heritage trail.

Southern Plateau and Mountain Area

Fraser Basin

This is largely a valley landscape where the Fraser River and its tributaries have incised themselves deep into the plateau. It extends from the Fraser River as far west as the vicinity of Tipton Lake.

Fraser Plateau

The Fraser Plateau lies south of the West Road (Blackwater) River, as a vast, undulating plateau. Protruding above the plateau are three shield volcanoes, forming the Itcha, Ilgachuz and Rainbow Ranges.

Nechako Plateau

The Nechako Plateau lies north of the West Road River, and to the hiker appears similar to the Fraser Plateau. There are numerous lakes and poorly drained depressions. Glacial features dominate the landscape, in the form of eskers and drumlins. Much of the plateau is underlain by tertiary lava flows. Notable exposures occur at Basalt Lake, and at waterfalls along the West Road River.

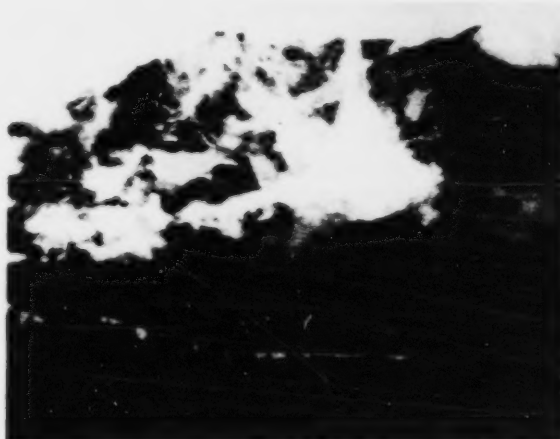
Coast Mountain Area

Kitimat Ranges

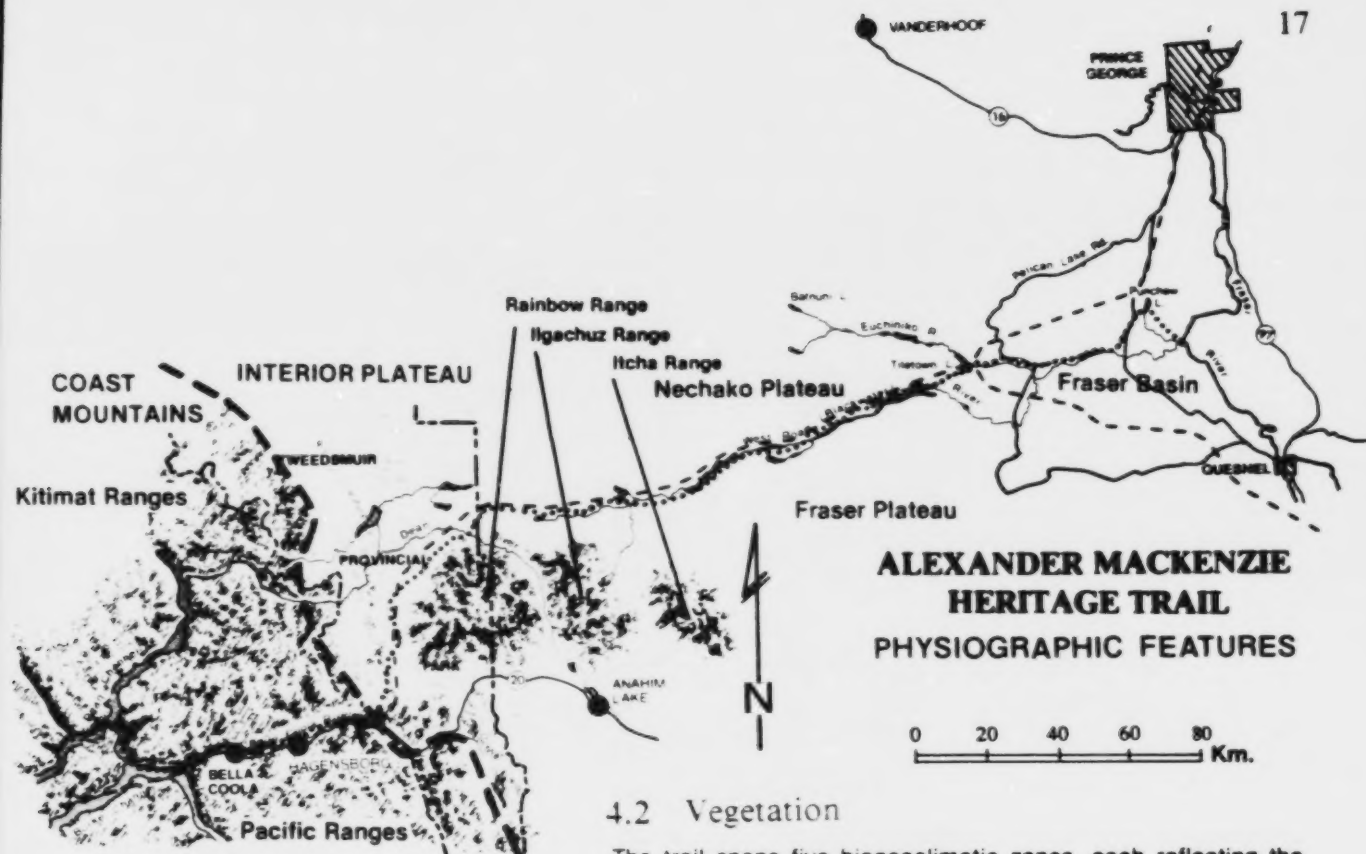
The north side of the Bella Coola valley is dominated by the massive, exfoliated granite domes of the Kitimat Ranges. The peaks have been heavily glaciated, but only small remnant glaciers remain.

Pacific Ranges

The higher, rugged, more heavily glaciated Pacific Ranges occupy the south side of the Bella Coola valley. Mt. Stupendous, named by Mackenzie, dominates the valley, with almost 3,000 m of relief.



Mt. Stupendous (2670 m) as viewed from the heritage trail in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park.



4.2 Vegetation

The trail spans five biogeoclimatic zones, each reflecting the delicate interaction of bedrock geology, glacial history, climate, and soil. Lately, man has become an increasingly important agent in the ecology of the trail.

Alpine Tundra Zone

This is the alpine area of Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, including Mackenzie Pass; characterized by a very short growing period, and severe growth conditions. Dominant vegetation is limited to lichens and very hardy species of flowers.

Coastal Western Hemlock Zone

Through the fjord, and along the Bella Coola valley are the deep rain forests. Ample rainfall, moderate temperatures year 'round and a long frost-free period provide excellent growth conditions for Western Red Cedar, Western Hemlock, Sitka Spruce and some Douglas Fir.

Mountain Hemlock Zone

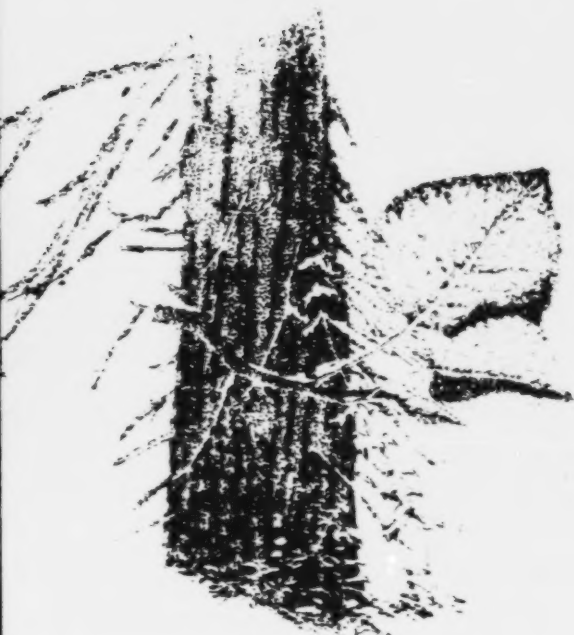
At higher elevations, along the steep slopes of the Coast Mountains is the Mountain Hemlock Zone. Yellow Cedar and Hemlock thrive in spite of extreme seasonal temperature fluctuations.

Englemann Spruce — Subalpine Fir Zone

The subalpine area of the trail is also the most scenic. It is limited to Tweedsmuir Provincial Park. In July, wildflowers are in profusion, drawing photographers from around the world.

Cariboo-Aspen-Lodgepole Pine-Douglas Fir Zone

Most of the Upper and Lower Blackwaters Management areas are in this zone. Long sections of trail traverse through pine and fir forest. At places along the trail, wildfire has opened clearings, giving riders and hikers excellent vistas of the broad plateau.



4.3 Cultural Resources

Theme 1 Alexander Mackenzie

- first person to successfully complete an overland crossing of the continent.
- his exploration resulted in the expansion of the fur trade into what is now B.C. Posts were built at Ft. George (1807), Ft. Macleod (1805), Ft. St. James (1806), Ft. Fraser (1808) and Ft. Alexandria (1822).
- he was the first European known to have crossed the Rocky Mountains.
- his exploration represents the first-ever survey of what is now British Columbia.
- his exploration opened the way for surveys by Simon Fraser and David Thompson, strengthening British presence on the Pacific northwest coast.

Theme 2 Native Prehistory and Ethnology

- the trail spans an area traditionally occupied by three culturally distinct native groups:
Nuxalk people — Bella Coola Valley
Southern Carrier — Interior Plateau
People of Waglisla — Bella Bella/Outer Coast.
- Mackenzie was guided along an aboriginal trail. Without the assistance of native guides, he probably would never have succeeded.
- Mackenzie's journal is one of the first and finest European accounts of early B.C. native culture.

Theme 3 Natural History

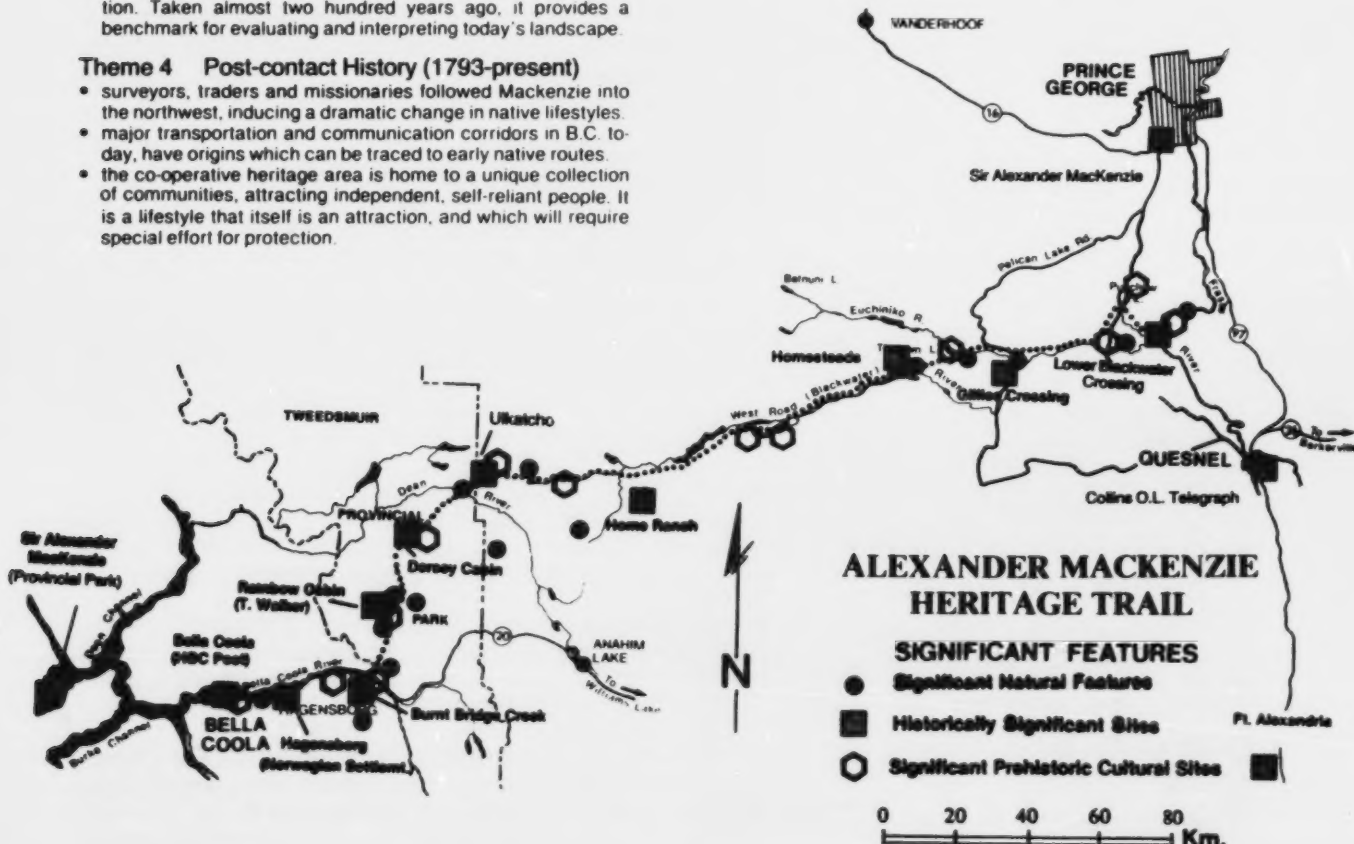
- the location of trails was dictated by physiography. Routes usually followed the highest terrain, through least dense vegetation.
- trade routes were located on patterns established by availability and source of trade goods.
- Mackenzie's journal includes notes on landform and vegetation. Taken almost two hundred years ago, it provides a benchmark for evaluating and interpreting today's landscape.

Theme 4 Post-contact History (1793-present)

- surveyors, traders and missionaries followed Mackenzie into the northwest, inducing a dramatic change in native lifestyles.
- major transportation and communication corridors in B.C. today, have origins which can be traced to early native routes.
- the co-operative heritage area is home to a unique collection of communities, attracting independent, self-reliant people. It is a lifestyle that itself is an attraction, and which will require special effort for protection.



Lester Dorsey's cabin at Tanya Lakes in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park.



5.0 Trail Development Objectives

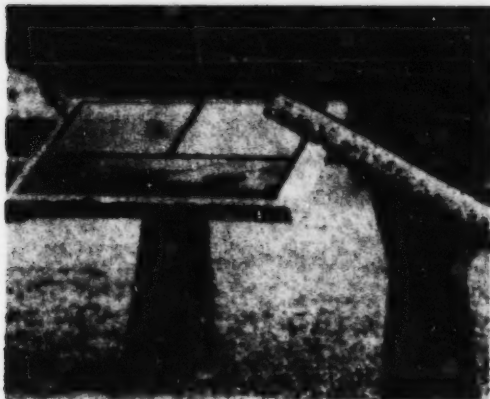


5.1 Heritage Protection

A major objective of the Agreement is preservation and protection of heritage resources in the trail area. It is proposed that this be achieved through designation of the trail as a Heritage Site, under the British Columbia Heritage Conservation Act.

Basic elements of heritage resource management include the following:

- the entire route is to be marked, clearly identifying it as a heritage trail.
- designation of the trail by Order-in-Council.
- a system of guidelines and permits will be in effect so that trail and adjacent natural resource development will not impact on heritage resources.
- a program of heritage resource conservation and management will be in effect during and after trail development.
- a series of management agreements will be established with the B.C. Ministry of Forests and B.C. Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, to cover specific sections of the trail.



Signs and other media will be used to relate the importance of the trail to the travelling public.

5.2 Interpretation - Information

An interpretation program has been designed to achieve the following:

- enhance awareness and appreciation of the heritage trail followed by Alexander Mackenzie.
- enhance awareness of Alexander Mackenzie, and his role in helping to create a Canada from sea to sea.
- enhance awareness, appreciation and understanding of heritage themes in the trail area.
- provide accurate, up-to-date information to visitors, enabling them to plan a safe, enjoyable visit to the trail that will not impair or disrupt its resources.

The following principles guide interpretive development carried out under the Agreement:

- interpretation of heritage resources on Indian reserves will not be proposed until appropriate measures are in place to ensure their protection, and native bands have been consulted.
- interpretation will complement national, provincial and regional heritage interpretation programs already in place.
- interpretation developed through the activities of co-operating non-profit societies will be encouraged.

5.3 Recreation Development

The following objectives provide a framework for the recreation development:

- to provide a variety of recreation opportunities in the trail area.
- to manage visitor use on the trail, according to carrying capacity.
- to concentrate the majority of use in areas where there are existing facilities and access.
- to encourage private-sector development of recreation facilities, consistent with the objectives of the Agreement.
- to mitigate conflicts between various user groups.

Recreation will utilize existing facilities in provincial parks, and at forest recreation sites. Initial development will upgrade sections of the trail to an acceptable standard of safety, and also to prevent ecological damage.



Horse use is a traditional and accepted way of enjoying the trail.

5.4 Natural Resource Management

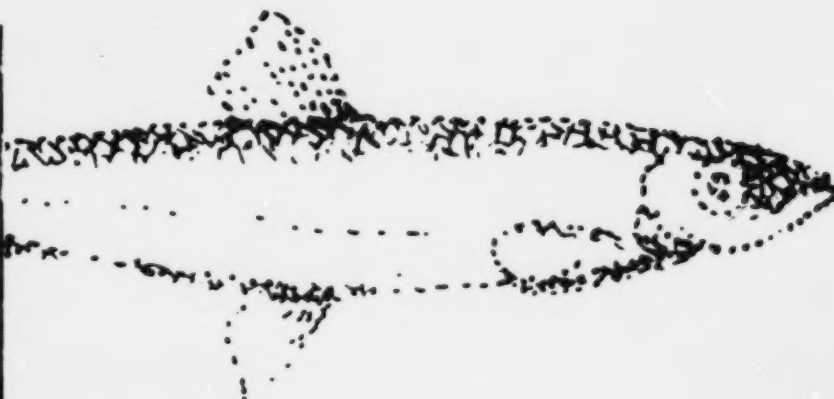
The trail crosses land under the jurisdiction of the B.C. Ministry of Forests and the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing. Other agencies with mandates for resource management include Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Environment, Agriculture and Transportation and Highways.

Natural resource management will continue to be important in the development and management of the trail. Management plans have been formulated and agreed on covering:

- designation and protection of the heritage route.
- co-ordination of development and resource protection activities.
- provision of appropriate, controlled public access to the trail area.
- inventory and assessment of forests, wildlife and fisheries.
- impact assessment, as required.
- co-ordinated planning for future development and management.



Major junctions in the trail will be well-marked, minimizing confusion and keeping visitors on the trail.



5.5 Trail Marking and Identification

One objective of the Agreement is to identify the heritage trail. This will be done through a program of trail marking and identification. Signing objectives are as follows:

- to identify the trail.
- to identify parties to the Agreement.
- to divert traffic away from ecologically or culturally sensitive sites.
- to protect private property.
- to identify compatible modes of access and visitor activity.

Trail marking will be done using small, stamped aluminum plates on posts or tree trunks, line-of-sight along the trail. Only major junctions along the trail will be marked using more conspicuous signs. Trailheads will be part of recreation and interpretive development.

5.6 Trail Standards

Trail standards adopted in this plan are based on B.C. Park Standards.



Trail upgrading, to Type II or III standard, will be restricted to areas within 5 kilometres of trailheads and development areas. Most backcountry areas, especially sections of trail identified for protection as prime examples of well-preserved aboriginal trail, will be maintained to Type IV standard.



5.7 Co-operative Activities

Continuity in management of the trail is important for the permanence and durability of the Agreement. Co-operative arrangements are proposed for Prince George and Bella Coola.

Locally operated non-profit groups, patterned after the co-operating association model used by Parks Canada, are proposed to assist select management functions. There are two distinct advantages to this:

- local community support for the Agreement is enhanced.
- less reliance on government for services in remote areas.

6.0 Development Projects



The following projects are recommended for implementation.

6.1 Fjord Management Area

Sir Alexander Mackenzie Provincial Park

Significance:

This is the westernmost point in Mackenzie's journey, commemorated by his famous inscription on a rock at water's edge:

"Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety three."

A plaque, erected in 1926 by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, is located in this park which commemorates Mackenzie's exploration.

An archeological survey conducted in 1983 revealed significant cultural resources in the park.

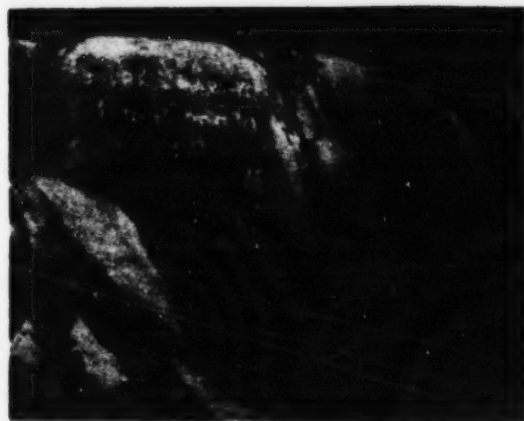
Interpretation:

No interpretive development is proposed for this location. There will be minor restoration work to the monument, which in itself is historically significant.

Recreation:

Park access is difficult and dangerous due to prevailing water and weather conditions. Recreation use will be mainly limited to visitors on day-excursions, by air or boat charter, from Bella Coola or Bella Bella.

A priority will be to provide appropriate landing and beach access, ensuring visitor safety and protection for archaeological resources near the monument.



"...We landed, and found the ruins of a village, in a situation calculated for defence. The place itself was over grown with weeds, and in the centre of the houses there was a temple, of the same form and construction as that which I described at the large village. ..."

6.2 Bella Coola Valley Management Area

Bella Coola

Site Significance:

Bella Coola is where Mackenzie first reached the Pacific Ocean, and represents the successful culmination of his exploration. It is also the site of an ancient Nuxalk village, one of several visited by Mackenzie. The section of his journal, describing his exploration through the Bella Coola valley, deals exclusively with native culture.

The most important natural feature for interpretation is the Bella Coola River. Harvesting for eulachon, and rendering it into the historic grease, continues today. Bella Coola is one of the few places where this tradition is maintained.

Interpretation:

Bella Coola is the best location for interpreting Alexander Mackenzie, native trails, and prehistory in collaboration with the local native band. Interpretation of the river, its significance to Mackenzie's exploration, and importance to the Nuxalk people will be major elements for on-site development.

Bella Coola will be the focal point for on-site interpretive development, an approach based on the following considerations:

- it is the only community located along the trail, with an infrastructure capable of supporting modest facility development.
- it is located close to Tweedsmuir Provincial Park (south) Headquarters, and the western terminus of the hiking trail.
- the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada is planning another monument to Mackenzie, to be sited in or near the community.
- the site is thematically symbolic, and readily identified with Sir Alexander Mackenzie.
- there is a large native community, whose participation will be important for successful interpretation of themes dealing with prehistory.

It is recommended that a semi-enclosed structure with permanent exhibits be built in the village, consolidating other elements of local history.

Negotiations with the community are a first step in site planning and impact assessment.

"... Near the house of the chief I observed several oblong squares, of about twenty feet by eight. They were made of thick cedar boards, which were joined with so much neatness, that I at first thought they were one piece. They were painted with hieroglyphics, and figures of different animals, ..."



6.3 Tweedsmuir Provincial Park Management Area Burnt Bridge Creek



"...We continued to descend till we came to the brink of a precipice, from whence our guides discovered the river to us, and a village on its banks...."

"....by this curious kind of ladder I entered the house at one end, and having passed three fires, at equal distances in the middle of the building, I was received by several people, sitting upon a very wide board, at the upper end of it. I shook hands with them, and seated myself beside a man, the dignity of whose countenance induced me to give him that preference."

Site Significance:

Burnt Bridge Creek is where Mackenzie negotiated the dangerous precipice, descending into the Bella Coola valley from the Interior Plateau. At Nutteaux (Friendly Village), he was royally treated by his native hosts.

Mackenzie's arrival at Burnt Bridge Creek signifies his first encounter with coastal native culture, where he made remarkably detailed observations on house form, art, fishing, superstition and beliefs.

At Nutteaux, Mackenzie changed his mode of travel, being taken downriver in dugout canoes by natives to complete the final leg of his journey to the sea. The Bella Coola River was a transportation corridor to the Nuxalk people, supplanting the trails so important to the southern Carrier of the Interior Plateau.

Today, Burnt Bridge Creek is the western terminus of the hiking trail.

Interpretation:

Interpretation will focus on Mackenzie's experience on the precipice, his arrival at Nutteaux, and descriptions of the village. His journal is a dramatic account of their descent from the plateau. Mackenzie made notes on changes in climate and vegetation as he descended to the floor of the valley, and was awed by the rain forest as he approached the native village.

While in the Bella Coola valley Mackenzie stopped at four villages. Ethnologists speculate there were as many as twenty-seven in the valley during the pre-contact era; fourteen of which were still active at the time of Mackenzie's visit.

Interpretive panels, mounted in a shelter (B.C. Park Standard), will be placed at the existing day-use area. At a viewpoint overlooking the highway, on the redeveloped trail, low-profile panoramic signs mounted on simple pedestals are to be installed for the purpose of interpreting the vista described by Mackenzie.

Recreation:

Recreation development will move the existing trailhead to the Burnt Bridge Creek day-use area. A new section of trail will be constructed to the proposed viewpoint overlooking Highway 20. Visitors will be encouraged to hike to this viewpoint, where they can look down on the Bella Coola valley and the site of Nutteaux, and at the same time walk on a short section of aboriginal trail, comfortably re-creating the experience of Mackenzie. The steep switchback trail to Fish Lake will also be upgraded.

Backcountry: Tweedsmuir Provincial Park

Future development for recreation includes upgrading the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail to Type IV standard, in accordance with B.C. park planning objectives.

Priorities include relocating sections of trail around meadows flooded by activities of beaver. At Dean River Crossing, a bridge, or other appropriate assist for hikers will be constructed.

Tommy Walker's cabin (Rainbow Cabin) and Lester Dorsey's cabin (at Tanya Lakes) will be maintained to an appropriate standard, possibly through co-operative agreements with local groups.

It was my wish to continue with them whatever way they went; but neither my promises or entreaties would avail: these people were not to be turned from their purpose; and when I represented the low state of our provisions, one of them answered, that if we would stay with them all night, he would boil a kettle of fish-roses for us.



Abandoned trapper's cabin in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park.

6.4 Upper Blackwater Management Area

Interpretation:

At this time, on-site interpretive development is not proposed for the Upper Blackwater area. Operators of private lodges, guide-outfitters and local residents will be encouraged to provide visitors with accurate information on access, safety and back-country etiquette. Archaeological site protection, in co-operation with the B.C. Heritage Conservation Branch, will be a major element of public information.

Recreation:

Recreation development will relocate parts of the trail, to bypass Indian Reserve and other alienated land. (See Appendix I) A total of 60 kilometres of trail will be located and marked.

As noted earlier, a road is proposed which will connect Anahim Lake with Vanderhoof, crossing the trail at Eliguk Lake or Gatcho Lake. Resources for trailhead development at either locations are not included in plan estimates. Construction of a road, creating new access and altering existing patterns of use, will require a re-evaluation of proposals. Significant heritage resources are located at both locations.

Gatcho Lake

Ulgatcho is a village located on Indian Reserve, on the shore of Gatcho Lake. Mackenzie passed through the site in 1793, and made detailed observations on a conspicuous longhouse. In 1876, George M. Dawson of the Geological Survey of Canada visited Ulgatcho. His photograph of the longhouse ("Culla Culla House") is the only visual record known to exist, of a structure actually seen by Mackenzie on his exploration.

Ulgatcho did not become a village until about 1870. Prior to that date it was an important native trading station, located at the confluence of several trails.

In this plan, it is proposed that the heritage trail be located south of the lake, placing it well-away from Indian Reserve land.

Eliguk Lake

At a large meadow along the trail, at the east end of Eliguk Lake, is a significant archaeological site. Here, in 1793, Mackenzie visited a Carrier village and provided detailed descriptions of the site and its inhabitants. Today, all that remains are remnant depressions of pit houses. Protection of archaeological resources is considered to be the highest priority at this location.



Dry Lake, a remnant surface feature left by retreating glaciers thousands of years ago near Titetown Lake.

"...In this part of our journey we were surprised with the appearance of several regular basins, some of them furnished with water, and the others empty;...."

6.5 Lower Blackwater Management Area Titetown Lake Provincial Park Proposal (1984)

Site Significance

Mackenzie crossed the Echiniko River just east of Titetown Lake, at a point now called "Mackenzie Ford", and spent the night at a Carrier encampment. Here, he recorded observations on one of the more curious landforms found along the trail. A field of deep kettles, known as Mackenzie's Basins, capture the interest and imagination of visitors to the area, and are a natural focal point for the new park proposal.

The area surrounding Titetown Lake has the richest assemblage of archaeological sites in the entire trail area. Most are aboriginal hunting or fishing stations. Ethno-historic research suggests the lake was important to the southern Carrier for fishing, and was an important junction in the aboriginal trail network.

Interpretation:

Interpretation will emphasize the importance of Titetown Lake in the aboriginal trail network, along with the natural history of the kettles and river system which fascinated Mackenzie almost 200 years ago. Messages will orient visitors to sections of well-preserved aboriginal trail which wind through the Echiniko River basin to the east of the park area, parallel to the Batnuni forest road.

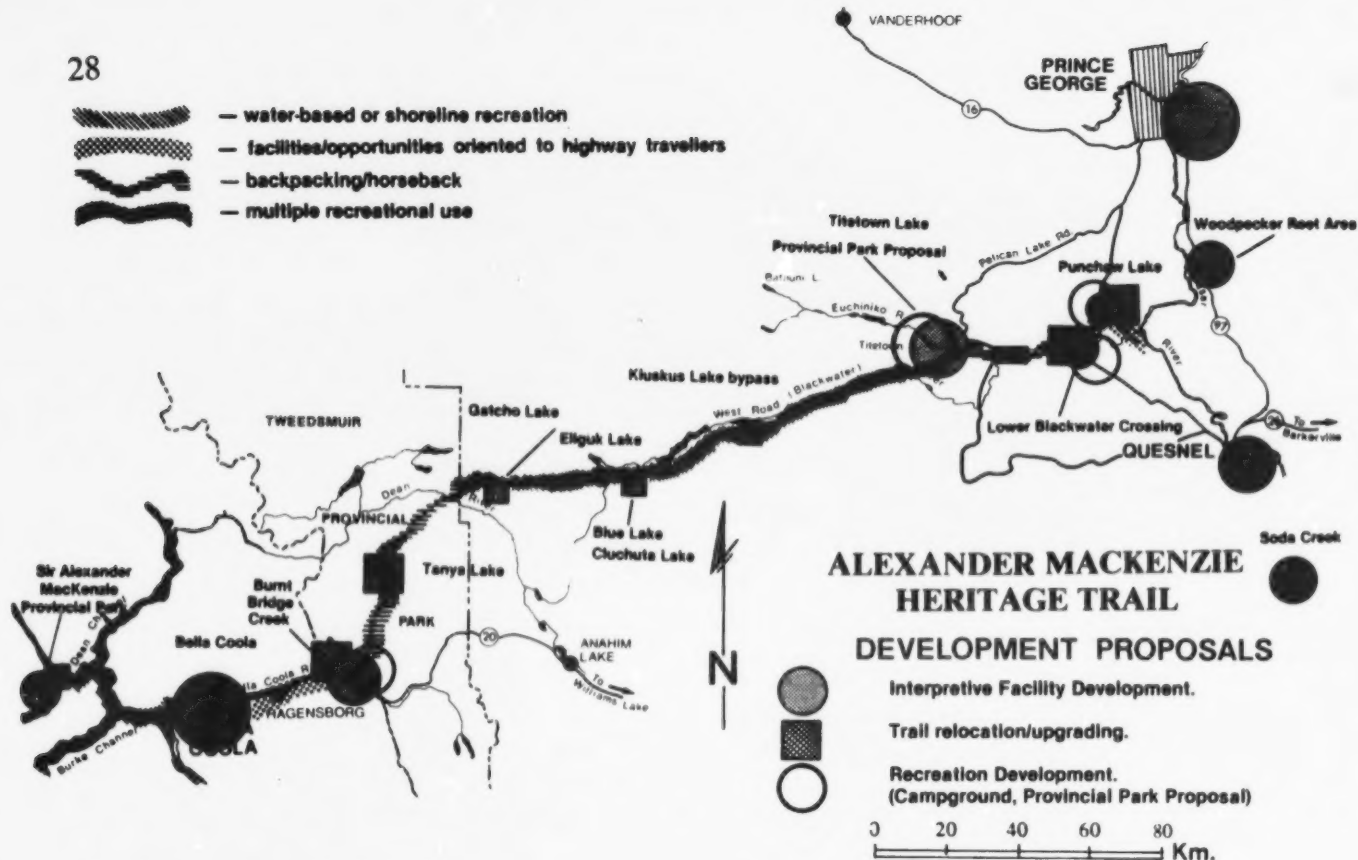
Interpretive panels will be mounted in an information shelter (B.C. Park Standard) at an appropriate location in the proposed park area.

Recreation:

It is recommended that the area surrounding the lake be designated provincial park (Class "A"), with moderately intensive facility development. This plan proposes construction of a 20 unit campground with limited visitor services. Day-use trail development will be an important part of the park development.

"...their slope from the edge to the bottom formed an angle of about forty-five degrees, and their perpendicular depth was about twelve feet. Those that contained water, discovered gravel near their edges, while the empty ones were covered with grass and herbs, among which we discovered mullard, and mint...."

-  — water-based or shoreline recreation
-  — facilities/opportunities oriented to highway travellers
-  — backpacking/horseback
-  — multiple recreational use



Lower Blackwater Crossing

Site Significance:

Alexander Mackenzie traversed a section of trail which follows the crest of the terrace, overlooking Lower Blackwater Crossing.

There is concentration of archaeological sites in the area, and it is considered to be another major junction in the aboriginal trail network. Major historic trails developed between 1860 and 1920 converge here, including the Collins Overland Telegraph line and the old Fort George-Quesnel stagecoach road.

A narrow canyon, now spanned by a bridge, is one of the few points on the lower reaches of the river where aboriginal crossings would have been feasible. Early surveyors (1874) describe an ancient river ford, approximately two kilometres upriver from today's bridge.

Interpretation:

Major story elements include Mackenzie's naming of the river (West Road), his traverse of the trail from Punchaw Lake, and his journey west to Titetown Lake and beyond.

Lower Blackwater Crossing is important because of the river crossing, and the network of converging historic trails. Many contemporary routes, even the forest access roads in use today, originate from native footpaths.

An interpretive sign will be placed at the picnic area.

Recreation:

Recreation proposals call for upgrading of day-use trails which originate from this site, and inter-connect with the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail. A loop-trail network will provide one to three hours of leisurely hiking, and re-create the experience of Mackenzie for trailhead visitors.

Punchaw Lake

Significance:

Mackenzie was guided along a trail from near the mouth of the West Road (Blackwater) River to the shores of Punchaw Lake. In his journal, he records seeing a native encampment near the lake.

Punchaw Lake has two recorded archaeological sites. One, excavated in 1973, was found to contain a large number of house-pits, hearths and over 100 m of remnant aboriginal trail passing through the site.

Maps of early surveyors confirm an aboriginal trail network connecting the lake with other important locations to the northwest and south. Remnants of aboriginal trail can still be found southeast of the lake. These are part of the system followed by Mackenzie, an easier route which bypassed the more difficult one through the Lower Blackwater Canyon.

The Blackwater Forest road parallels the aboriginal trail followed by Mackenzie. Cleswuncut Lake is an intermediate point between Punchaw and Lower Blackwater Crossing, where Mackenzie spent his second night on the trail. It is now a forest recreation site.

Interpretation:

Punchaw Lake is an important stopping point for visitors travelling the Blackwater forest road. As an existing forest recreation site, it will be used to orient visitors to other points of interest in the Lower Blackwater area.

Interpretation will include Mackenzie's locating and naming of the West Road (Blackwater) River, caching his canoe and beginning the overland trek, his traverse of the trail to the southeast of Punchaw Lake, and native occupation and use of the land around the lake.

Interpretive panels and an area map will be located at or near the forest recreation site.

Recreation:

Recreation development proposals include upgrading the existing campground and picnic sites. There will also be day-use trail development southeast of the lake, with the forest recreation site as point of origin.

"...Our guides conducted us along the lake through thick woods, and without any path, for about a mile and an half, when we lost sight of it. This piece of water is about three miles long and one broad."

"...We then crossed a creek and entered upon a beaten track, through an open country, sprinkled with cypress trees."





6.6 Highway 97 Corridor

Interpretation:

Interpretation signs will be sited at existing rest areas on the main highway between Prince George and Williams Lake, creating awareness of the Agreement, and strengthening regional historic themes centred on Mackenzie. This is designed to stimulate interest in other heritage attractions in B.C., especially Ft. Macleod Provincial Park, Ft. St. James National Historic Park, Beaumont Provincial Park (Ft. Fraser), Kitwanga National Historic Site, and Ft. Alexandria National Historic Site. Interpretation will encourage highway travellers to visit the regional museum in Prince George, site of a proposed interpretive exhibit.

Story elements include Mackenzie's journey on the Fraser River between Prince George and Ft. Alexandria, his portage through Ft. George Canyon, his observations on native culture, and his return upriver to locate the overland route to the Pacific Ocean. Integration with regional themes will build on Mackenzie's overall achievements, which led to the expansion of the fur trade into B.C., ultimately helping to create a Canada from sea to sea.

Woodpecker Rest Area

Site Significance

Mackenzie drifted downriver, thinking it (the Fraser) would lead him to the Pacific Ocean. His knowledge of early northwest geography led him to believe he was on the Columbia River. Immediately west of here, deep in the Fraser basin, is Ft. George Canyon. Mackenzie was forced to portage the canyon during his downriver journey. B.C. Ministry of Forests has developed a network of trails to the canyon, accessible from Nadsilnich Lake (Westlake Provincial Park).

Interpretation Proposal:

It is recommended that interpretive panels or panoramic signs be placed at this existing rest area, overlooking the river basin. Also, it is suggested that the "Historic Cariboo" sign be moved 2 km north, with improvement of highway signs advising motorists of access to the rest area.

Quesnel, Junction of Highways 97/26

Site Significance:

Mackenzie and his voyageurs continued along the river (Fraser) to the site of Quesnel, stopping only to make repairs to their birchbark canoe. They were hard-pressed to find enough material allowing repairs to be made. Mackenzie reported there was little game in the area, forcing them to provision themselves whenever an opportunity arose.

The exploration party had little contact with native people, but visited unoccupied villages and fishing camps. Traditional Carrier culture is based on a seasonal migration between fishing and hunting.

The Canada-British Columbia Agreement for Recreation and Conservation was signed May 23, 1982 in Quesnel.

Interpretation Proposal:

An interpretive panel is to be installed on an existing B.C. parks Information shelter, located at the junction of Highways 26 and 97, about 5 km north of Quesnel. A suitable information display or exhibit will be provided at the tourist information centre/regional museum in co-operation with local citizen groups.

Soda Creek Rest Area, Highway 97

Site Significance:

A few kilometres north of here, on Highway 97, is the site of Ft. Alexandria. This was a Hudson's Bay Company post, established in 1822, shortly after the merger with the North West Company. It was named in honour of Sir Alexander Mackenzie and is now a National Historic Site.

Ft. Alexandria is the most southerly point reached by Mackenzie before he decided to return upriver in search of the overland route to the Pacific.

Below Soda Creek, the Fraser River becomes unnavigable, due to dangerous rapids and deep canyons. Between 1850-1860, Soda Creek was an important terminus for navigation and trade, connecting the gold-fields of the Cariboo with Ft. Langley and Ft. Victoria.

Interpretation Proposal:

It is recommended that an interpretive sign be installed at this paved rest area.

6.7 Prince George

Site Significance:

After a near disaster while crossing the continental divide, Mackenzie came to the upper reaches of the "Great River" (Fraser). Drifting, they passed the site of Prince George, yet for some reason failed to notice a major tributary flowing from the west, the Nechako.

Mackenzie noted some smoke rising from native encampments along the banks of the (Fraser) river but did not attempt to contact any inhabitants. If he had done so, he might well have learned of a trail system leading to the Pacific coast, along the Nechako and Nass River systems.

Thirteen years later (1806), Simon Fraser explored the upper reaches of the river (Fraser) using Mackenzie's journal as a guide. Fraser went on to explore the Nechako, and established North West Company trading posts at Ft. Fraser, Ft. St. James and Ft. George (now Prince George).

Interpretation:

The major purpose of interpretation in Prince George is to link themes of the Agreement with other national and provincial historic parks, particularly those along Highway 16.

The extensive network of aboriginal trails, and their importance to transportation and communication routes of today will also be interpreted.

The Ft. George Regional Museum has been approached with a proposal for an indoor exhibit, which would complement existing displays. Such museum development takes advantage of an existing facility and will be co-ordinated with relocation of an existing National Historic Site commemorating Mackenzie. The existing monument will be moved by the NHSMBC from its present location near the Prince George railway station, to Ft. George Municipal Park, also site of the museum.



Soda Creek rest area overlooks the Fraser Basin, near Ft. Alexandria.

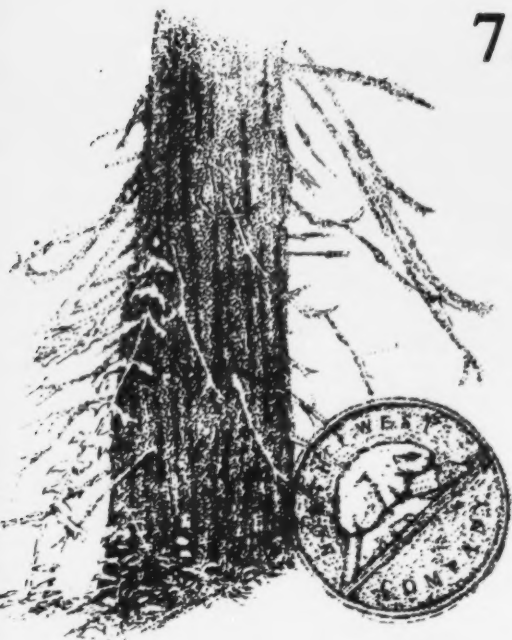
"....I listed the difficulties that threatened our continuing to navigate the river, the length of time it would require, and the scanty provision we had for such a voyage: I then proceeded for the foregoing reasons to propose a shorter route, by trying the over land road to the sea...."

7.0 Off-site Interpretation

Only a small percentage of Canadians will have an opportunity to explore the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail. Even fewer will be able to experience the entire trail in a single visit.

Off-site media are proposed to communicate broader, nationally significant aspects of the Agreement. This will allow more people to benefit from interpretation of the trail, without encouraging an unmanageable number of visitors. This approach is justified as follows:

- Encouraging large numbers of visitors to certain areas of the trail will have an adverse impact, ecologically and socially.
- Adequate facilities to serve large numbers of visitors are not in place.
- Most of the trail is considered to be wilderness or semi-wilderness, and many potential visitors will not have skills necessary for a safe, enjoyable visit. These people would benefit most from a vicarious experience.
- Off-site media provide the best approach for linking Agreement themes with related national and provincial opportunities for heritage interpretation.



7.1 Poster Series

It is recommended that a poster be produced, carrying an attractive illustration capturing the essence of the trail. The face of this poster will portray identity, with the reverse side used for presentation of a summary of the approved development concept.

7.2 Edu-kit

An edu-kit, with components based on photos, early maps, journal extracts, oral history tapes and other resource materials, is proposed. It will be targetted to specific curriculum and teaching levels.

7.3 Trail Guidebook

In 1981, the Nature Conservancy of Canada sponsored production of a limited number of trail guidebooks. It is recommended that resources be approved for an update, to be done in co-operation with a sponsoring agency. This would not duplicate the proposed guidebook patterned after the National Park Guide Book Series. Rather, they would complement each other.

7.4 Guidebook

It is recommended that a well-illustrated and easily read guidebook, up to 120 pages in length, be produced as a saleable publication. Content will be patterned after the National Park Guidebook series and will include the following elements:

- background to Agreement
- trail setting and description
- natural history
- historic background
- regional integration of historic themes
- a description of the trail resources
- recreation opportunities

8.0 Impact Assessment

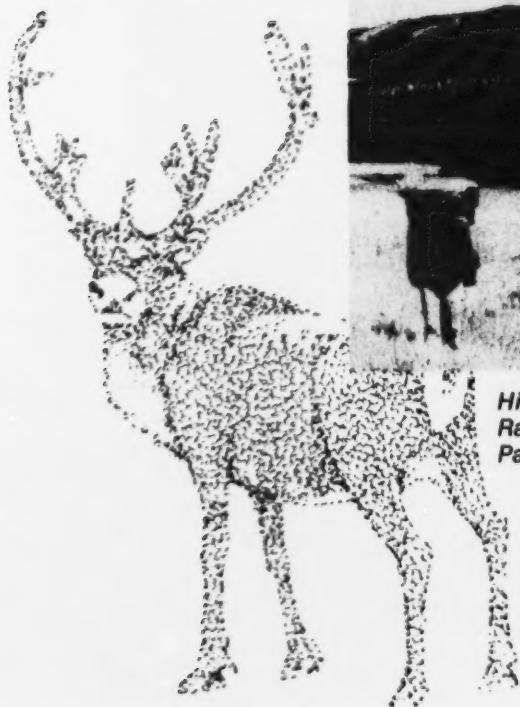
Resources are proposed for continuing a program of monitoring and impact assessment. Programs will be specific to the trail, and will complement existing resource monitoring programs of participating agencies. They are intended to mitigate any damage from potential development, and will be carried out under two areas of study:

Natural Resource Management

- Fishery Resource Inventory
- Forestry Resource Assessment
- Range Resource Inventory

Heritage Protection

- Archaeological Inventory and Analysis



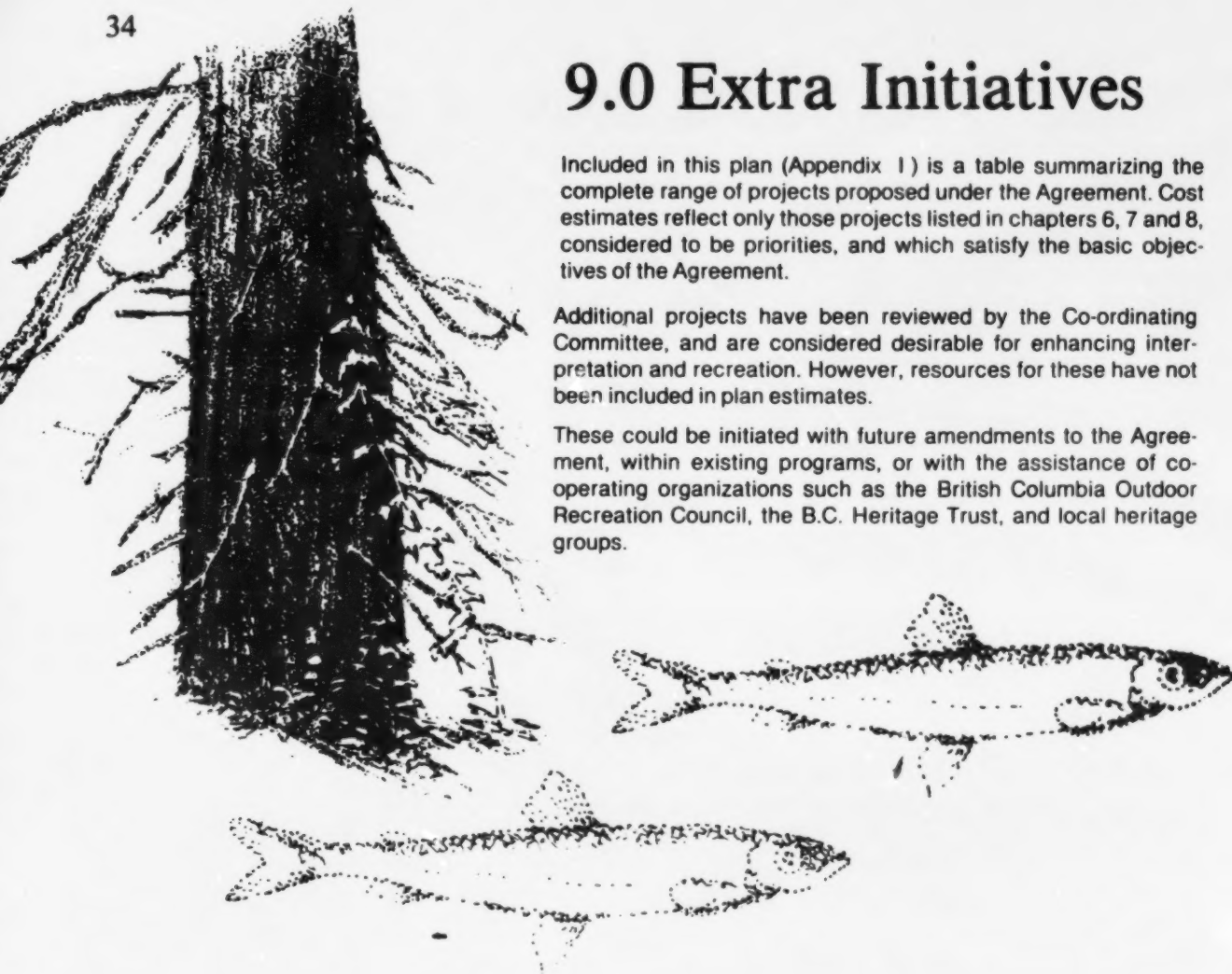
Hiking the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail in the Rainbow Conservancy area, Tweedsmuir Provincial Park.

9.0 Extra Initiatives

Included in this plan (Appendix 1) is a table summarizing the complete range of projects proposed under the Agreement. Cost estimates reflect only those projects listed in chapters 6, 7 and 8, considered to be priorities, and which satisfy the basic objectives of the Agreement.

Additional projects have been reviewed by the Co-ordinating Committee, and are considered desirable for enhancing interpretation and recreation. However, resources for these have not been included in plan estimates.

These could be initiated with future amendments to the Agreement, within existing programs, or with the assistance of co-operating organizations such as the British Columbia Outdoor Recreation Council, the B.C. Heritage Trust, and local heritage groups.



9.1 Encourage development of the area near the mouth of the West Road (Blackwater) River, in co-operation with B.C. Ministry of Forests and Weldwood of Canada. This would include designation of the area where Mackenzie started his overland journey along the native trail as a historic site.

9.2 On certain segments of the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail, there may be a requirement to regulate certain types of use and to provide alternate means of access.

- The Canoe Crossing Trail, between the Bella Coola Valley and Fish Lake in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, should be re-established and maintained to allow horse-parties easier access to the trail.
- Access trails, serving hikers and horseback riders, from Highway 20 in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park should be maintained including:

Tweedsmuir Trail
Octopus Lakes Trail
East Branch-Rainbow Trail
Boyd Pass-Crystal Lake Trail

- The Slough Grass (Ulgatcho Summer) Trail between Fish Lake and Tanya Lakes should be improved. This will reduce incidence of horse-use in Mackenzie Pass, a fragile alpine area of Tweedsmuir Provincial Park.

9.3 As visitor numbers increase, there will be a requirement to upgrade facilities at certain locations. Special attention should be given to the following areas:

Kluskoi Lake
Eliguk Lake
Gatcho Lake
Tanya Lakes
Fish Lake

9.4 Visitor use of the coastal waterway between Bella Coola and Sir Alexander Mackenzie Provincial Park is expected to increase. A recreation inventory of this area would be a first step towards identifying recreational reserves along the shoreline, for the benefit of boaters and kayakers.

9.5 A film production in the form of a feature film, documentary or docu-drama is proposed, to be produced through the National Film Board of Canada or other organization. Such a production, if completed prior to 1993, could enhance awareness of Sir Alexander Mackenzie and this Agreement, as part of a bicentennial celebration on his exploration.

9.6 Other initiatives, targetted to 1993, should also be considered. These may include:

Commemorative Coins
Postage Stamps

Summary of Management Recommendations

That the works, projects and priorities described in this Master Development Plan be approved, dependent upon suitable appropriation of funds by both parties to the Agreement.

That steps be taken immediately to designate the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail as a Heritage Site under the British Columbia Heritage Conservation Act.

That every effort be made to consult, inform and seek the continuing involvement of local citizens during all phases of implementation.

That the portion of Tweedsmuir Provincial Park over which the trail passes be considered for Class A Provincial Park status.



APPENDIX II

COST SUMMARY

TOTAL PROJECT ESTIMATES

	COST X 1000 \$
Fjord Management Area	20.0
Bella Coola Valley Management Area	164.0
Tweedsmuir Provincial Park Management Area	130.0
Upper Blackwater Management Area	85.0
Lower Blackwater Management Area	491.0
Heritage Protection	111.0
Trail Marking	10.0
Natural Resource Management	20.0
Hwy. 97 Corridor/Prince George	56.0
Off-site Interpretation	294.0
	TOTAL \$1381.0

All costs are shown as 1984\$ Class "D" estimates. This implies only a tentative outline of development costs at project definition stage.

APPENDIX III

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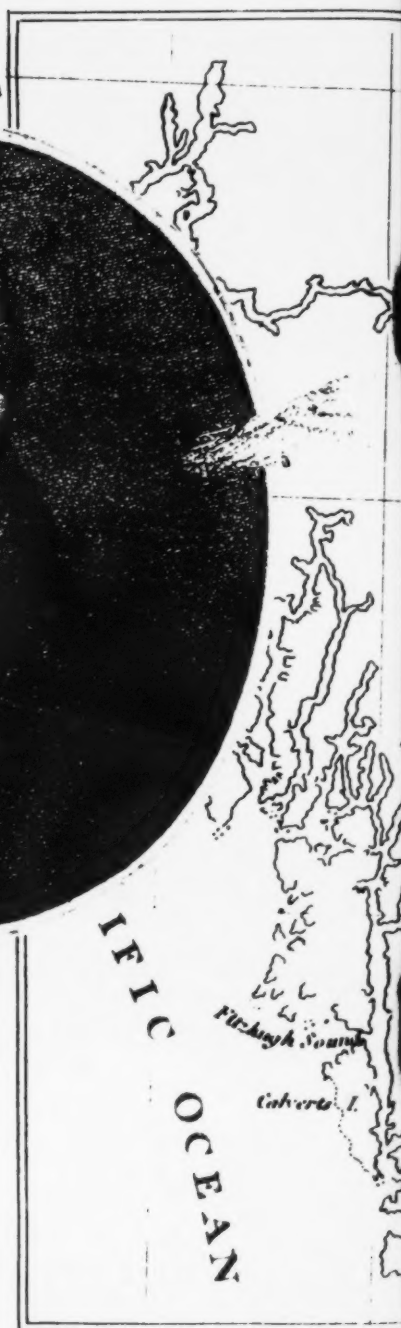
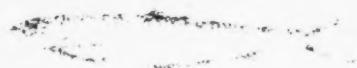
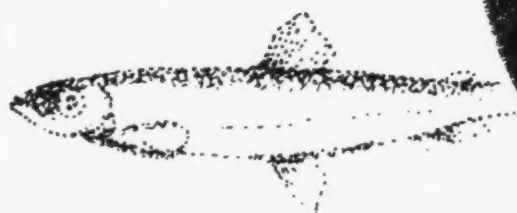
National Parks
Canada

1885



1985

Centenaire des
parcs nationaux



Canada

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